

Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office  
2177 Salk Avenue, Suite 250  
Carlsbad, California 92008  
Phone: 760-431-9440  
Fax: 760-431-9624  
<http://www.fws.gov/carlsbad>

# News Release



Contact: Jane Hendron, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office - 760/431-9440 ext. 205  
[Jane\\_Hendron@fws.gov](mailto:Jane_Hendron@fws.gov)

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## **Status Review Finds San Bernardino Flying Squirrel Does Not Require Protection Under the Endangered Species Act**

The San Bernardino flying squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus californicus*) is a small tree-dwelling mammal that inhabits forest canopies in the San Bernardino Mountains, San Bernardino County, California. Today, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced its determination that this native squirrel does not require protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

In a thorough status review of the species using the best available science, the Service found that the squirrel is abundant where it is found and that the threats of habitat loss from urban development, habitat fragmentation, wildfire, urban air pollution and climate change do not pose significant threats to its long-term survival. The Service also found that existing regulatory mechanisms are adequate for sustainably managing the species.

One of 25 subspecies of the northern flying squirrel, the San Bernardino flying squirrel feeds on truffles, insects, bird eggs, pinyon pine seeds and other vegetation. They are typically found in old growth and some second-growth forests, and use stumps, snags and dead trees for nesting and foraging.

Flying squirrels get their name from a furred membrane called the patagium that extends from the wrist to the ankle, enabling it to easily glide between trees.

The finding on the San Bernardino flying squirrel will be published in *the Federal Register* on April 5, 2016. An advance copy of the notice of availability is on public view at the [Federal Register](#) today. The finding will be posted tomorrow on [Regulations.gov](#). In the search box, type in Docket Number FWS–R8–ES–2016–0046.

The Service was petitioned by the Center for Biological Diversity to list the subspecies in 2010. The preliminary finding on the petition indicated listing under the ESA may be warranted and the Service undertook an in-depth review of its conservation status.

Historically, San Bernardino flying squirrels were documented to occur in both the San Bernardino Mountains and San Jacinto Mountains. However, no recent evidence of occupation by the squirrel in the San Jacinto Mountains has been documented.

The squirrels do not have large home ranges and do not travel long distances. It is possible that the large gap – at least 21 miles – and the presence of a highway between the two mountains precludes the squirrel from re-occupying the San Jacinto Mountains.

The San Bernardino National Forest encompasses most – about 76 percent – of modeled habitat for the squirrel. Clear-cutting and salvage logging do not occur on the forest; therefore, large-scale fragmentation of the squirrel's habitat is not expected to occur. Additionally, fuel treatments undertaken to reduce risk of catastrophic wildfire do not appear to be impacting the squirrel population.

Although wildfires have occurred in both the San Bernardino and San Jacinto mountains over the past 100 years, the frequency and extent of the fires has not significantly reduced available habitat for the squirrel and they have been documented reoccupying burn areas within seven years.

America's fish, wildlife and plant resources belong to all of us, and ensuring the health of imperiled species is a shared responsibility.

A photo of the flying squirrel by Dr. Lloyd Glenn Ingles © California Academy of Sciences is viewable here - [Glaucomys sabrinus](#)

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